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Chapter II
Physical Aspect

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[77] "Measure, only when dead, in order to see the size of the grave." This attitude, encountered among the caboclos, has already also passed over to the Guaraní. Many of the Mbáá of western Paraná refused to permit anthropometric measurements, saying that measuring the body of a person is enough to make the latter begin to pine away. In Amambai I participated in the funeral of a Kayová child: before the grave was opened, the father took the measurement, breaking a pole to the length of the body.

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141 It is feared that the researcher, with his measurements, will make black magic against the individual. Men and women not infrequently become so terrified during the process that their sweat runs over their bodies. The persecution mania that dominates [57] a large part of the Guaraní becomes apparent there. In Araribá, where I measured almost all of the adult Indians, the family heads would gather afterwards, in the evenings, at the chief's house to discuss the matter. In the opinion of some optimists I had taken the measurements in order to send them clothes, others would say it was in order to make pictures, others thought it a matter of military conscription, and others, finally, that it was "in order to finish us, who are already very few." This is an explanation, incidentally, that agrees very well with the afflicted spirit of the Guaraní.

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128 In Paraná I collected the measurements of 26 Mbáá, 17 men and 9 women. At the post of Araribá the measurements covered in all 25 Nandéva, 9 men and 16 women. The material will be analysed in a special article. I did not take any measurements in the other settlements, out of fear of endangering the work of cultural anthropology.

142 Concerning the descriptive or somatoscopic characters of the Guaraní, it is difficult to establish a tribal type. There are some, especially Nandéva, whose features are so markedly Mongoloid that it is almost impossible to distinguish them from Japanese individuals.

2: Schaden--167 E-4, 5 (1946-1954) 1962 SM4 Guarani SM4
Kayová

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X. Religious dance of
the Kayová-Guaraní
of Dourados.

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XI. Kayová cemetery of Amambai.

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773 armed with glowing arrows will shoot and kill anyone who has the notion of escaping. The Guaraní has an incomparably greater fear of this death than he has of biological death. And what is the origin of this belief? Should we interpret it as a simple survival of Jesuit teachings or as a fusion of the Apocalypse with the idea of eternal condemnation in the Christian hell? We do not know. The important thing in any case is the verification that, integrated into the Guaraní doctrinary system, it has been transformed into a pagan representation. For the idea of this terrifying death has revived the ancient tribal mythology and perhaps is the decisive factor in the incomparable intensity of the Guaraní mysticism, which today impregnates all cultural manifestations of the tribe.

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• 764 One of the most difficult subjects of conversation with a Guaraní -- whatever subgroup he may belong to -- is what refers to death and funeral practices. The fear of the dead is such that the informants in general are struck dumb as soon as the conversation touches on this domain. As far as the Mbã are concerned, [114] it has not even been possible for me to persuade them, in any of the groups visited, to show me a grave.

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198 Formerly interment in a clay urn might have been common among the Guaraní. Nowadays this funeral practice does not exist in any of the villages that I have been able to visit. If it existed, its disappearance is surely linked to the introduction of iron utensils, responsible for the decline of ceramics, of which only insignificant vestiges remain today.

/135/ Burial inside the huts, according to my observations and the information collected, is not observed among the present-day Guaraní either.

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[171] Among the Mbã, however, the memory that they formerly had such a practice continues to live. Nowadays the graves are found in the forest, some kilometers from the village, far from one another, there being over them a small mound of earth, hut of guaricanga and a wooden cross thrust in at the feet of the deceased (the latter detail found, by the way, not only among the three

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Guarani subgroups, but also among the Kaingáng /Caingang/ of the Rio Grande do Sul). The burial takes place on the day immediately after the death, it falling to the Nanderú to plant the cross and to direct the ceremonies, which are repeated next to the grave for several days, to the sounds of the mbaraká and the takupú. The same ceremonies are performed on the occasion of the death of children.

The Nandéva of Bananal, perhaps the most acculturated ones, take their dead to the public cemeteries of Peruíbe and Itanhaém; they bury them in a box made out of boards covered with cloth, and above the grave they set a cross; on the other hand, the dead person is lowered into the grave with the "devotion" (djeataá, religious ornament) on the body, an indication (even if there were no others) that those acculturative phenomena do not correspond to the radical religious transformation that they would seem to reveal at first sight. Quite the contrary, the fact that they transport their dead companion a distance of many leagues goes along very well with the fear of the anguary that the Guarani have.

In the south of Mato Grosso the Nandéva remember having had among them the interment inside the dwelling; they abandoned the house, without burning it, and went to live at some distance away; today such a practice is no longer observed.

Concerning the Kayová, I have been unable to learn whether in bygone times they made graves inside the houses; but even today many abandon or burn the dwelling in which someone from the family, be it adult or child, has died. At the Pêto Indígena Francisco Horta, one of my informants (Isidro) left his house, building another one at some distance, because in the old one "many children died"; perhaps the explanation was based on the idea that the house shelters noxious substances.

In general, a Guarani interment follows in part traditional usages, in part more or less Christian customs coming from the neighboring populations with whom the Indians come in contact.

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- 775 And, as could not fail to be the practices reflect in some
• 764 way the ideas about the destiny of the soul of the deceased. Over
372 the grave is lighted -- Mbîá, Nandéva, and Kayová -- a small
fire /136/ especially on the night of the interment. The Kayová
say they do it for the soul to find the road to the Beyond, a usage
[114] which might be taken as a reinterpretation, in native terms, of an
originally Christian practice were it not for the evidence to the
contrary, the information contained in ancient sources concerning
other Tupí-Guaraní (16).

16. /From p. 152 of the original source./ Of
the three recommendations that the Tupinambá
made to the dead, the first was that they should
not let the fire go out (d'Etreux, 1929, p. 167).
Other related tribes also believed in the need for
illumination for the soul to make the dangerous
journey to the Beyond and not become lost in the
dark regions that it has to cross. See, for instance,
Métraux, 1928 b, p. 122.

- The fire is lighted immediately after the burial; when it is the
case of a child, sometimes they content themselves with one or
two candles. The fire is considered indispensable on the grave
[115] of the adults. Marçal, my principal and best informant, told
me the Nandéva explanation, adding that he did not know whether
it was also valid for the Kayová: the ñeëguê of the deceased,
carrying the memory of all the places traversed during life, feels
the need to see them all again after death, only afterwards does
it go to the Beyond; the fire serves it for illumination. The same
informant told me that, for the Nandéva, the deceased some-
times "manifests" himself to the survivors by means of cries, weep-
ing, or some other way; it is because the ñeëguê is in need of
light. Someone then goes to the cemetery to light a candle or a fire
[774] on the grave. It is to be noted, by the way, that, according to
this explanation, it is the ñeëguê (originally only the sublime part
of the human soul) that needs the light, while a person "who does

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775 not have entrance to the sky," that is to say, who is not accepted
 • 764 because of a disorderly life, returns to roam about on earth with-
 372 out rest, becoming transformed into an anguary. A doctrine which
 [774] obviously takes into account less primitive concepts, since it re-
 places the belief in the duality of the human soul by the Christian
 notion of reward and condemnation.

764 At the Póto Indígena Curt Nimuendajú (Arairibá), where the
 178 burial is usually done in hammocks (unless the post administrator
 [769] provides a wooden box), the graves are decorated on the Day of
 [768] the Dead in the same way as the Christian ones are, but, on the
 other hand, they keep the custom of putting on the tomb the ob-
 jects that belonged to the deceased, especially in the case of
 768 children. When a child dies, they put on the grave the toys left
 764 behind by it and on the following days go to take the things that
 they still find; on the tombs of adults they place the poronga
 /water container/ that the deceased -- or rather the deceased woman
 -- used for carrying water, besides other objects of personal use.

The "odds and ends" that belonged to the deceased, and
 which are not buried with him, are placed on the tomb for an
 unlimited time. At the cemetery of the Póto Indígena Benjamim
 Constant there was a vast number of things: bottles, porongos,
 calabashes, shoes, bows, dishes, pots and pans, and so on. Ex-
 posed to the weather, these objects are gradually /137/ destroyed;
 it also happens, as Capitão Alberto told me, that the better things
 are "stolen" by some interested person. The temptation, in fact,
 must be great. I have not been able to find out whether there is
 [775] actually an idea that the "spirit" (anguary) of the dead person
 [114] can utilize the "odds and ends" that he used during his life (17).

17. /From p. 152 of the original source./

No calabash is left on the grave, aside from
 those that belonged to the dead man or woman,
 contrary to what V. D. Watson states, 1944,
 p. 40.

768 Among the Mbá I was told that the material goods of the deceased
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[428] continue to be the property of his mbegua, which is the reason that nobody can inherit them. The mbegua would come to look for the one who tried to appropriate them. Pablo Vera of Yroña confessed that sometimes an old man keeps the objects of the dead man, because he will die within a short time anyway.

• 764 In the Kayová cemeteries, to the extent that I am familiar with them, the graves are very close to one another. The burial is done in hammocks, the grave being "seven spans" deep (Capitão Alberto). It is also customary to leave on the grave the pole used to carry the hammock with the deceased. In general, the burial takes place on the day immediately following the death (18).

[766] 18. /From p. 152 of the original source./ An extraordinary case, reported by the former administrator of the P. I. Benjamin Constant, is that of an Indian woman attacked by wildfire, who, there not being any cure, was buried still alive: a very deep grave was dug, so that she would not get out.

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177 In spite of the resistance of the individuals more averse to innovations, the younger Kayová generation of the Mato Grosso villages has adopted the so-called "wake of the cross," a week after the death of children or youths. It is a feast, common in [171] Paraguay and among the caboclos of the southern Mato Grosso region, which is held in the house of mourning, extending far into the night; guitar music accompanying songs in Guarani ("Paraguayan polkas"), dancing (principally when it is a matter of a child), and fireworks, all moistened with a great deal of drink. The cross, accompanied by burning candles, is kept in the house until the feast is finished; on the following day, in the morning, everybody goes to the cemetery, planting it on the grave. This usage is based on the belief, current in the neighboring [775] Paraguayan population and analogous to ideas of the Guarani [777]

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religion, that the child, when it dies, becomes a "little angel" and goes directly to heaven; thus there is no reason for grief or sadness. Capitão Alberto of Amambai told me: "A wake is no good, for the people make merry; this is not the Indian way, all should go sadly to the cemetery to take the deceased." In any case I have the impression that the feast of the "wake of the cross" among the Kayová is not accompanied by acculturation that is properly religious; what interests the Indian is the recreational aspect and the socializing. -- At the only burial that I had an opportunity to observe -- that of a dead child at Amambai -- one could indeed see that the members of the family were sad, but, on the other hand, there were no manifestation of mourning whatsoever. And more than once I have been told -- contrary to what V. D. Watson states (19) --

19. /From p. 152 of the original source./
V. D. Watson, 1944, p. 40.

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[82] that it is always like this: very little weeping and no /138/ crying out. Furthermore the Kayová say that they originally buried the dead, whether children or adults, without a funeral ceremony of any kind -- a statement not very likely, however. In any case, for the children they know prayers of "sad remembrance," sung either on the day of the death or at a later time.

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[783] Like so many other religions, that of the Guaraní in its diverse modalities, offers to the faithful the hope of seeing the dead beings again in the Beyond. To this is linked the usage of burying the dead in a recumbent position, with the feet toward the east, "so that the spirit will find the path of the sun" (Capitão Alberto). Actually, it is a case of setting out for the yvy marã eý, the mythical paradise of the Guaraní, which many believe to be located in the direction of the east. According to Marçal's explanation, the journey of the dead to the Land without Evil will be made shortly before the destruction of the world, which will be a victim of fire.

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776 This is also a fair statement of the beliefs of the Cayuá of the present time, and we may therefore safely consider it as representing the past of this people's religion. A third class of supernaturals existed, made up of the remote "sky god" culture heroes and creator beings. The earthly demons almost universally had peculiar individual traits, such as one leg, double feet (that is, legs with feet and toes extending both forward and back), red hair (1), dwarf or giant size, and similar features. No Cayuá who knew his demonology would be likely to mistake the particular spirit he might at some time be dealing with. Furthermore, the demons usually had special individual interests in life. One sustained himself entirely upon bananas (*sic*), another on honey, and usually each lived in a particular type of place, some in the water, some in the *cerrado*, some in the *lajuras* groves, some among the *pinde* palms. Some, at least, were associated as owners or protectors of certain plants or animals, and one might incur their wrath by treating the plant or animal in question in a careless or disrespectful manner. Almost any of these beings was capable of doing harm to men, although certain ones were more aggressive in this enterprise than others. A few demons may have been passive as far as man was concerned, and even fewer may occasionally have helped man by teaching him the use of plants or the knowledge of crafts. By and large, however, these beings were to be avoided, or placated if avoidance were not possible. Probably all of them had individual names.

775 The ghost spirits were not individually named but simply referred to generically as *angwéra*. They abounded and were omnipresent—or at least were capable of turning up practically anywhere at any time. Many of the commonest *angwéra* were ghosts of departed Cayuá—if, indeed, this was not the ultimate origin of them all. Measures were usually taken upon interment to see that the ghost of the deceased human did not return or stay in the neighborhood of his erstwhile house or village. Houses of the deceased were probably abandoned and burned. The use of fire seems closely connected with the Cayuá idea of exorcising ghosts. A fire was kindled by the grave of the newly deceased; fires were kept alive at night in the houses of the Cayuá (and are still) with the thought that this would keep lurking ghosts away. The night was especially fearful, and few would needlessly venture out alone.

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[764] Great fear of possible harm caused by these spirits appears to have been characteristic of many of the Tupi-Guarani, and even whites were occasionally appealed to for help.⁷⁷ There is good reason to believe that the same was largely true of the Cayuá.

778 There is no direct indication that the ancient Cayuá had idols or other similar objects of worship. The Jesuits in their writings complained of the Guarani who sometimes apparently had a special structure separate from their village where they kept the bones of a former powerful *po'á*, displayed

⁷⁷ Nimuendajá was once called upon by some Apapocuva-Guarani to use his rifle against a particularly malevolent and persistent ghost.

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The elementary family among the Cayua is a self-sufficient unit with regard to the economy, suffering enormously with the loss of one of the persons participating in the economic activity, to the point of its ceasing to function in the case of loss of one of the members of the couple. Divorce is common, it sufficing for this that one of the spouses declare to the other that he is going to leave. In general they do not wait long to realize a new marriage. Marriage is considered a very natural and commendable thing, so that nowadays there are few young people who are not married.

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Death: There are two principal types of sicknesses that can afflict the individual. The so-called "sicknesses of people" are thought to be cured by the use of the large number of remedies known by the Cayua. But for the ailments caused by sorcery no means of cure are known. Although not a very common event, at times the death of some child occurs, which, nevertheless, seems to cause only a relatively small disturbance in the life of the close relatives. The death of an adult is followed by the mourning of the close relatives. It is customary to bury the body

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the day after the death. They dress it completely, sometimes even with two or more changes of clothing, because the case of a son or daughter who gives a dress to the mother or a pair of trousers and a shirt to the father, on the occasion of their death, is not rare. After the corpse has been placed in the hammock of the deceased, it is taken to the cemetery. The hammock is carried by two men at the same time, distant relatives and friends of the deceased, who take turns after intervals. The objects of personal use are buried with the body, except those of value, such as iron pots, which frequently pass into the hands of some close relative of the deceased. The mourning is great on the occasion of the funeral. All the women weep a great deal, and the men who are close relatives of the deceased also weep. After the body has been placed in the grave, the tomb is closed, a large gourd being put on top of it.

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The deceased person becomes agwery, being able to wander freely on earth without being seen by living human beings. The agwerys can often be dangerous, frequently being tempted to return to the family and do some harm. In case only the wife and some small children remain, the house is then burned, the occupants going to live in another place.

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Reciprocal Behavior

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Parents and children: The relations between parents and children are the most important ones in Cayua society. The parents

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must care for the children and educate them, which generally takes place according to a sexual division. The responsibility for the education of the daughter falls to the mother, and although she also takes care of the son while he is very small, she does not need to concern herself much about his education. She teaches the daughter the tasks of the domestic economy, what must be done in the clearing, etc. For his part the father teaches the son how to take care of the clearing, how to build houses, hunt, fish, make bows, etc.

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The behavior of the children in relation to the parents is quite well defined, and although they may manifest a certain degree of affection, particularly while they are small, they are not allowed to become very familiar with the parents, having to respect them and obey them on all occasions.

The relations between parents and children, such as those we have just defined, are observed above all in the elementary family. Nevertheless, they are also extended to the classificatory relatives, parents and children, but the obligations differ as to rigor.

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"Siblings" and "Siblings": This relationship is also important in Cayua life. The "siblings" of the same sex are connected by very close and intimate ties. The sisters play and work together constantly, helping each other as much as possible. The older sister takes care of the younger one while the latter is small. The same thing is observed between brothers.

ARCHEOLOGY OF THE GUARANI AREA

Many archeological finds have been made in the area formerly inhabited by the *Guarani*, but only a few systematic investigations have ever been undertaken of ancient sites or cemeteries. The attribution of some of the remains unearthed in former *Guarani* territory is often uncertain because the *Guarani* seem to have been late comers in the regions where we find them in the 16th century. They were preceded by people of different prehistoric cultures, some of which, such as the *Caingang*, have survived up to the present. The main problems center around classification of stone implements, which cannot always be easily distinguished from those produced by the early non-*Guarani* population. Pottery, however, leaves little or no margin for doubt. The aboriginal occupants of Paraguay or southern Brazil had either no ceramics or else only a very crude ware. *Guarani* ware presents the following features: A corrugated decoration produced by thumb impressions on the soft clay, linear designs in red and black on a whitish background, and the use of large conical chicha jars as funeral urns (pls. 11, 12).

There is a striking resemblance between the pottery of the ancient *Tupinamba* of the coast (Netto, 1885; Ihering, 1904) and that of the *Guarani* of Paraguay. The modern *Chiriguano*, descendants of *Guarani* invaders from Paraguay, still make chicha jars almost identical in shape and decoration to those which are so often unearthed in their home country. Moreover, typical *Guarani* vases have been found associated with rosin labrets, a lip ornament still worn by modern *Caingú*.

Direct, or primary, urn burial was the usual form of interment among the *Guarani* and persists among the *Chiriguano* of Bolivia. Archeology has amply confirmed the statements of early writers. The corpse was forced with the limbs flexed into a jar and covered with another vessel.

Ihering (1895, 1904), Mayntzhusen (1912), Ullrich (1906), Kunert (1890, 1891, 1892), Kunike (1911), Meyer (1896), Ambrosetti (1895 b), Vellard (1934), and Linné (1936) have described isolated finds. Max Schmidt (1932) has given a list of recent discoveries and has attempted to make a classification of the rich archeological material in the Museum of Asunción. Pottery of unmistakable *Guarani* origin has been collected on the islands of the Paraná Delta (pl. 11, top, center). They have been published and discussed by L. M. Torres (1913) and Outes (1917, 1918). Lothrop (1932, pp. 122-146) has given us a careful description of the results of his investigation in a *Guarani* cemetery at Arroyo Malo, a small tributary of the Luján River, east of El Tigre, in the Province of Buenos Aires. Serrano (1936) has dealt with *Guarani* archeology in connection with his study of the ancient native cultures of Uruguay.

The ware found in areas historically occupied by *Guarani* tribes consists mainly of funeral urns, large plates or vessels used as lids for these urns, and some pots which formed part of the funerary equipment.

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Girls' puberty.—Among ancient *Guarani*, at her first menstruation, a girl was sewn in her hammock and remained there for 2 or 3 days. Her hair was cut short and, until it grew to its former length, she had to forego meat and to work hard under the supervision of an older woman. For modern *Caingú* also, coming of age is a critical period which calls for many ritual observances; the girl is secluded for 3 weeks behind a screen in a corner of the house and eats only a few foods, which must be lukewarm. She must not talk, laugh, lift her eyes from the ground, scratch herself, or blow on the fire. She must also listen to advice concerning her future life as a wife and a mother. Before she resumes normal activities, a shaman washes her with a special decoction. [756]

Marriage.—There is little information on marriage in ancient times. Girls were married soon after puberty. Child betrothal is reported among the *Guarani* of the Paraná River. In some cases little girls were given to grown men, who lived with their child wives, probably in the house of their future parents-in-law. 178
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Child betrothal is reported among modern *Caingú*, but the girls remain with their parents, who receive presents from their prospective sons-in-law. The preferred form of marriage seems to have been between cross-cousins and between a maternal uncle and his niece. Unions with a mother and her daughter and sororal polygyny can be inferred from allusions in the Jesuitic literature. Only chiefs and influential shamans seem to have been able to support several wives. Some powerful caciques are said to have had from 15 to 30 wives. The levirate is stated by Ruiz de Montoya (1892, p. 49) to have been observed by chiefs. Today residence is patrilocal. 595
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Death.—So strong is the hope for reincarnation that a dying *Apapocw* (Nimuendajú, 1914 a, p. 307) accepts death with great fortitude. He sings medicine songs while women wail and the shamans chant, shaking their rattles in farewell to the departing soul. 763
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Among the ancient *Guarani*, as soon as a man had breathed his last, his wives and female relatives gave the most violent demonstrations of grief, often injuring themselves by flinging themselves to the ground from some elevation (Ruiz de Montoya, 1892, p. 52). 178
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The ancient *Guarani* put their dead into large chicha jars and covered them with a bowl. These funeral urns were buried up to the neck (Ruiz de Montoya, 1892, p. 52).⁴ Modern *Caingú* bury their dead directly in the ground with arms and legs flexed against the body or lay them with their possessions in a wooden trough or hollowed tree trunk. 178
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Both ancient and some modern *Guarani* bury their dead in the hut, which is immediately abandoned. The *Caingú* of Paraguay inter the 000

⁴ Ruiz de Montoya, 1892, p. 52: " . . . muchas enterraban sus muertos en unos grandes tinajas, poniendo un plato en la boca para que en aquella concavidad enterrados sus cuerpos de ellos aunque entre tinajas las enterraban hasta el cuello."

Guarani SHY
Brazilian Indians SHY

B 272 HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES

6 The Brazilians and Guaranies *generally* disliked the
266 trouble of digging pits for sepulchres. These
764 hungry anthropophagi buried within their own
bowels the flesh of those that yielded to fate.

6 It must be confessed however that the Gua-
764 ranies of after-times, more humane than their
ancestors, placed dead bodies in clay pitchers.
Seeking the savages in Mbaeverà in the midst
of the woods, I met with a plain artificially
made, the trees being cut down for the pur-
pose, and there I found three pitchers of this
kind, each of which would contain a man, but
all empty. The bottoms of the pitchers were
placed toward the sky, the mouth towards the
ground. But from sepulchres, let us hasten to
funeral obsequies.